

**UNITED ANIMAL NATIONS***A not-for-profit, charitable organization*

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Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Fax: (860) 240-0023

VIA FACSIMILE

RE: Opposition for HB 5118, Removes the requirement that Certificates of Origin for dogs sold by Pet Shop Licensees be filed with the Department of Agriculture

Dear Environment Committee,

Founded in 1987, United Animal Nations (UAN) is an animal advocacy organization with more than 40,000 supporters nationwide, including several hundred in Connecticut. On behalf of these supporters, I am writing to oppose HB 5118, a bill that would remove the requirement that Certificates of Origin for dogs sold by Pet Shop Licensees be filed with the Department of Agriculture.

UAN's primary mission is to bring animals out of crisis and into care, and one way we do this is by operating the volunteer-driven Emergency Animal Rescue Service (EARS), which provides temporary shelter for animals displaced by natural disasters or criminal seizures. In 2009 alone, UAN deployed EARS volunteers to nine incidents in which more than 2,600 animals were removed from unsanitary, unhealthy and inhumane mass breeding operations. As such, we are uniquely positioned to recognize the burden this legislation will bring to people, animals and agencies that oversee animal care.

In one case, our EARS volunteers cared for 550 small-breed dogs removed from a mass breeding facility in Kaufman County, Texas. The dogs suffered from serious medical ailments and were housed in filthy conditions. Many were severely matted and suffering from chronic infected wounds, internal and external parasites, and serious skin and eye infections. It was obvious that many of these animals had never known life outside their wire cages. Local animal control officials could not care for so many animals in need of critical care, so they turned to UAN and other non-profit agencies to help the community bear the burden caused by one out-of-control breeder.

As you can see, commercial breeding operations, if left unregulated, can negatively impact the community, animals and local law enforcement agencies. When officials must seize animals from a breeding operation and take responsibility for the dogs, municipal animal shelters, which are typically already overwhelmed with unwanted animals, become burdened with hundreds more.

Because this legislation opens the door for mass breeding operations to sell poorly bred and potentially ill puppies to unsuspecting consumers, and potentially increases the burden on local agencies and animal welfare organizations, I respectfully oppose this legislation on behalf of UAN and all our Connecticut members.

Sincerely,

Nicole Forsyth

Nicole Forsyth
President and CEO

Bringing animals out of crisis and into care